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'Travels in Koordistan.' 1834. Donor, J. V. H. Irwin, Esq. 35 Volumes of Reports and other Documents relating to La Plata, Uruguay, Santa Fè, Buenos Aires, Confederacion Argentina, &c. Donor, T. J. Hutchinson, Esq. 'The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China, at the close of the 16th Century.' Hakluyt Society's Publications. 'The Alpine Journal; a Record of Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation, by Members of the Alpine Club.' Donor, the Alpine Club. 'The Student's Manual of Ancient Geography,' by W. L. Bevan, edited by W. Smith. Murray, 1867. Donor, the publisher. Anderson's 'Narrative of an Embassy to China in 1792-94.' Donor, S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Exploration of the River Javari by Señor R. y Paz Soldan.' 1867.

The following Papers were read :—

- 1.—*Route from Erzerum to Diarbekr.* By JOHN G. TAYLOR, Esq.,
H.M. Consul, Diarbekr.

AN abstract of this lengthy and important paper, communicated by the author to Mr. J. K. Lynch, F.R.G.S., was read to the meeting. Mr. Taylor stated that from Erzerum as far as Erzengan his route lay over an often-travelled country, and being well known did not require any further description; but from Erzengan he traversed a country, as far as Mazgerd and Kharput, hitherto quite unknown to Europeans, even to that old Asiatic traveller Barbaro, though he must have been very near the line of road which he (Mr. Taylor) found so well repaid his trouble.

By reference to the map it would be seen that only two practicable routes are known from the north through the Deyrsim Mountains to the plain of Kharput. They both concentrate at Mazgerd, and had already been described by Mr. Taylor in a paper transmitted to the Royal Geographical Society. The object of the present journey was to trace a third route through the mountains, also to Mazgerd, the debouching point, as shown in the paper above mentioned, of all communications between Kharput and the north; and to search for ancient inscriptions, which—Mazgerd having occupied, as the author had pointed out, a prominent place in that period—he hoped would be found in its vicinity; both objects, he was glad to report, had been realised.

In his previous memoir he had given a full account of Mazgerd,—its old Pyre appertaining to the Parsee worship, and some facts relative to its ancient history,—a recapitulation of which would here be useless; but it was necessary to bear that description in mind, as adding much interest to the present route, which leaving Erzengan

follows the south side of the plain on which that town is situated, and enters the low mountains of the Koozichan district, in which the plain is lost. These mountains further on rise higher and higher, culminating in the snow-capped heights of the Deyrsim, which, as seen from this point, seem to bar all further progress, before reaching which the party came to a village called Pilameer, which was from Erzengan the first stage on the road.

The name Pilameer may easily be derived from, or be an abbreviation of, Pul El Ameer, the Ameer's Bridge. On his arrival he was very hospitably received by the Kizzelbash chief, Shah Hoosein Beg, whom he induced ultimately to conduct him through the new route.

From Pilameer Mr. Taylor was surprised to find a good road, though hilly in parts, leading through the Koozichan district as far as the Deyrsim range, through which, though popular error represented it as inaccessible, a remarkably easy route exists all the way to Mazgerd, never, he believed, since the days of the Seleucidæ, traversed by civilised beings, and which the jealousy of the Kurds has hitherto concealed from foreigners, for the obvious reason that the former do not wish it known that so easy a route exists through their formidable mountains. It passes through undulating valleys studded with thriving villages; and the country on either side is beautifully wooded with oak, pine, and poplar, and opens here and there into fine level, well-watered plains. Two considerable affluents of the Muzoor Su, that great tributary of the Murad Su, or Upper Euphrates, rise in these valleys, called by natives the Dor Boghaz Su and the Hidor Kighi, or Pirzi Su: the former joins the Muzoor Su near Pakh, and the latter at Pirzi. Neither of these great affluents appears on any map, and the course of the main stream of the Muzoor Su, as laid down by Kiepert, is altogether erroneous, as would be hereafter pointed out.

The ruins which exist in and about the villages are principally the remains of old churches, mediæval Armenian; some of them being not more than five or six hundred years old. These valleys are inhabited by a numerous population of Kurds, though a few members, sparsely scattered, of the Armenian nation still exist on mere sufferance, and, of course, are comparatively indigent. The Kurds appear well off, and the seclusion which they enjoy protects them from the impositions and taxes laid on their less fortunate brethren. Two hours before reaching Mazgerd a place is reached where volcanic action has thrown up a large mass of needle-pointed rock, which has at one time been scarped and formed into an impregnable castle. Where it could not be scarped, and round its weak points are traces of Pelasgic walls. No real building is to

be seen on the rock, which has been hollowed out, and chambers and galleries formed, which are ornamented with some taste by a waving scroll having been sculptured round the roofs and doorways. On the very top of this mass of rock are the remains of a room, or probably an old temple, from which an extensive view of the mountains and plains, about as far as Kharpūt, is obtained. Before each gate is a vaulted entrance or portico, furnished with seats, all of which are cut out of the rock. On the walls of one of these porticos, Mr. Taylor had the good fortune to find his anticipations crowned by the discovery of a cuneiform inscription* of sixteen lines, which from the character he hoped would turn out Assyrian, and probably one of Tiglath Pileser's. The position of this inscription in the old gate is very interesting, as determining in some measure its great age, and as corroborating the author's opinion, communicated in a former memoir, that Mazgerd was the gate of the Deyrsim and commanded the easiest, shortest, and most practicable route through the mountains to the north and the Black Sea. He set to work and took a cast of the inscriptions which he transmitted by a Tartar messenger to Erzerum, to be thence sent to Sir Henry Rawlinson. Opposite this cuneiform inscription was an elaborately-formed cross, which shows that this castle occupied a prominent position in two widely distant periods of history. Mr. Taylor added that he had also made many observations, and collected materials for a new map, which, with the one previously forwarded, would, he hoped, give a good and true idea of this country.

The original Paper will be printed in *extenso* in the 'Journal,' vol. xxxviii.

The PRESIDENT said this was but a very brief abstract of one of the most elaborate and valuable communications on comparative geography that had ever been made to the Royal Geographical Society. By the courtesy of Lord Stanley, the original documents which were communicated to the Foreign Office, had been, upon the representation of their President, transferred to the possession of the Royal Geographical Society. Therefore, in the first place, they had to return their best thanks to Lord Stanley and the Foreign Office. He regretted the absence of Sir Henry Rawlinson, who was best able to do justice to Mr. Taylor's researches into the historical sites and antiquarian remains of Kurdistan. He saw present, however, one gentleman—Mr. Lynch—who knew a great deal of that region, and he should be glad to hear from him any observations he might wish to make.

Mr. LYNCH thought the paper was one of great interest, as it opened up a

* Note by Sir Henry Rawlinson:—"This inscription, although written in the Assyrian character, is in the old Armenian language, and belongs to Ruza, son of Arghisti, who was king of the mountains of Nairi. Arghisti was contemporary with Sargon and Sennacherib, Ruza with Esar Haddon and Asshur-bani-pal (Sardanapalus). It probably dates from about B.C. 660, and is the latest Armenian inscription yet found."

country of which we really knew scarcely anything. We had hitherto been entirely ignorant of this line of communication, re-discovered by Mr. Taylor, between the valley of the Euphrates, Babylon, Assyria, and, indeed, all those seats of the earliest civilisation, and Europe. He (Mr. Lynch) had himself travelled over that country from Constantinople by two routes into Southern Asia; one by Tabreez and Persia, and the other by Aleppo and Syria, the more southern route. He had also travelled by a third route, the direct one from Constantinople to Baghdad, over the Mehrab Dag, the highest and most inaccessible of the Taurus ranges, which was a most difficult passage, particularly in the winter. An expedition under Colonel (now Sir Fenwick) Williams, sent out to determine the Persian and Turkish boundary, was shut up for months by the snow in this region, and it was supposed there was no possible way of getting into Southern Asia except over this Mehrab Dag. The value of Mr. Taylor's paper consisted in this, that he had discovered a route the whole way from Erzerum to Kharput, so easy that a railway could be laid down along it. In addition to this Mr. Taylor had found very interesting inscriptions in the cuneiform character illustrating the history of that country in a remarkable degree. One discovery was a small gold vase, which was now in his (Mr. Lynch's) possession, and a lithographic drawing now lay on the table for the inspection of the meeting; it had been dug out of a mound near Nisibin, and had been pronounced by connoisseurs to be of the true Assyrian type.

Lord HOUGHTON said the paper related to countries of so much historical importance that he regretted it had not been delivered to us in further detail. He thought it was a curious illustration of the value of the Royal Geographical Society in awakening an interest in what he might call the by-paths of known countries. The great caravan-routes round this district were as well-known to ordinary geographers as the railroads of England. But there was this feature, that in the middle of Kurdistan there existed a perfectly easy mountain-road, unknown to the travellers who passed through the country. It was kept almost from the knowledge of the Government of the country itself, and yet it was full of beauty and interest. He thought we might be proud that the Geographical Society did help towards these discoveries, by exciting the attention and endeavours of travellers. We knew all the great aspects of the world, we knew all the great routes of the world, we knew by inference and analogy the nature and peculiarities of most districts of the world which had not yet been visited. It remained for this Society and other similar societies to do what was most important and most useful, namely, to complete the work of investigating these little interior spheres of unknown countries such as the present which had been visited by Mr. Taylor. He could only recommend that other travellers should undertake a similar work in other regions, and present their reports to this Society.

2. *On the Geography and Recent Volcanic Eruption of the Sandwich Islands.* By Dr. THOMAS STALEY, D.D., Bishop of Honolulu.

BEFORE speaking of the late volcanic eruption in the island of Hawaii, the author said he believed that a few words might be useful on the geography of the group generally, of which Hawaii is the largest and the youngest member. He proceeded as follows:—

The Sandwich Islands, now constituting the kingdom of Hawaii, occupy a most central position in the Pacific. They lie in a diagonal